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*Plant passions
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Cultural and designed landscapes*

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Editors
 Christina Dyson
 Richard Aitken
editor@gardenhistorysociety.org.au
 8 Eastern Place, Hawthorn East,
 Victoria, 3123

Enquiries
 TollFree 1800 678 446
 Phone 03 9650 5043
 Fax 03 9650 8470
 Email
info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au
 Website
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Postal Address
 AGHS, Gate Lodge
 100 Birdwood Avenue
 Melbourne Victoria 3004

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BRANCH CONTACTS

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 PO Box 1630
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tonybyrne@effect.net.au

Queensland

John Taylor
 11 Joynt St
 Hamilton QLD 4007
 Phone: 07 3862 4284
jht@hotkey.net.au

South Australia

Ray Choate
 Barr Smith Library
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 Adelaide SA 5005
 Phone: 08 8303 4064
ray.choate@adelaide.edu.au

Southern Highlands

Eleanor Dartnall
 478 Argyle Street
 Moss Vale NSW 2577
 Phone: 02 4869 1825
eleanor@dartnalladvisors.com.au

Sydney & Northern NSW

Stuart Read
 Phone: 02 9873 8554 (w)
stuart.read@planning.nsw.gov.au

Tasmania

Elizabeth Kerry
 PO Box 89, Richmond, TAS
 Phone: (03) 6260 4216
liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au

Victoria

Pamela Jellie
 5 Claremont Cres
 Canterbury VIC 3126
pdjellie@hotmail.com

Western Australia

Caroline Grant
 9A Grange Street
 Claremont WA 6010
chhgrant@yahoo.com



In 1915 English-born school teacher Winifred Waddell accepted a position in Melbourne and departed armed with this briefcase filled with a selection of much-treasured books, including Fitch and Smith's *Illustrations of the British Flora* (1901), a presentation to her from Carlisle High School. On arrival her interest was soon stirred by the Australian flora, which she worked tirelessly to preserve (see story on page 13). [Photo: Robin Marks]

Cover: *Pinus insignis* (now *P. radiata*), the Monterey pine from California, depicted in the first volume of Edward Ravenscroft's magnificent folio publication, *Pinetum Britannicum: a descriptive account of hardy coniferous trees cultivated in Great Britain* (Edinburgh & London, 3 vols, 1863–84, plate 5) and a great favourite with Australian planters of the mid to late nineteenth century—see our story on conifer connections on page 6. [State Library of Victoria]

Gardening in a changing climate

Don Garden

The last three years have been too much for our *Alnus jorullensis*. We have photos from ten years ago when the tree stood tall and green in the backyard. But at that stage the fifteen-year drought that Melbourne would experience up until mid-2010 was only five years old. The next six years saw the tree suffer, especially over the hot and dry summers, and each year it had fewer leaves. The record-breaking heatwave of 2008–09, notably the searing Black Saturday, 7 February, saw it lose all its leaves. A few have since emerged from the lower trunk, especially after the wettest summer on record in 2010–11, but the superstructure is dead and stands stark and leafless, waiting for me to find a tree surgeon.

I am sure that most gardeners in Australia have had similar losses in the last decade, although it is the droughts, floods, cyclones, heatwaves, and bushfires of the last three or four years that have taken the highest toll. How many gardens have shrivelled in heat, or been swept away by fire, water, or wind? Alarming, because of climate change, such attacks upon our lives are predicted to continue and gardeners and their gardens will need greater resilience.

This subject has become highly politicised by a small number of well-resourced climate change deniers who have shown considerable skill in stirring up a cloud of doubt. They have won the ears of some of our politicians and media and have created understandable uncertainty and rejection because, after all, it is a much more comforting message, and it is far easier to do nothing or to resist change.

While I am not a climate scientist, as a climate historian I have read much about these issues and will offer insight into the evidence that convinces me that we face a formidable future. What are the climatic and weather implications for those of us who grow plants, including in our gardens?

Extreme weather has recently fixed our attention. Following the major heatwave summer of 2008–09, when a 46.4°C day was recorded in Melbourne—the hottest ever experienced in any Australian capital city—and 48.8°C on the same day at Hopetoun in the Mallee, we had a series of tragic events in late 2010 and early 2011. The strongest recorded La Niña event contributed to devastating floods in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and northern Western Australia. The most severe recorded drought in the south-west of Western Australia was accompanied by severe bushfires. Then Cyclone Yasi, a Category 5 and one of the largest and strongest recorded worldwide, wreaked havoc on northern Queensland and brought record rains to large areas of central and southern Australia. Melbourne has just finished its wettest summer by far. Is it all coincidence or is it ‘proof’ that climate change is occurring?

To start, we do not know for sure, and there is plenty of evidence both ways. There is a mantra that while it is not possible to point to any particular climate event and attribute it to climate change, the increase in frequency and extremity of events is in accord with the expectations of most climate scientists.

In essence, climate change modelling indicates that south-eastern Australia is expected to be hotter and drier, which will be conducive to more frequent and intense bushfires, but with short bursts of very intense rainfall. North-eastern regions are predicted to be hotter and with higher rainfall and flood events,

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punctuated with dry periods and strong cyclones. South-west Western Australia has been experiencing a long and severe decline in its rainfall since the 1970s, and this will continue. The recent extreme weather is in accord with scientific expectations, but a conclusive connection cannot be drawn.

Even more worrying, however, are the long-term weather and climate trends—and these are what climate scientists prefer to emphasise rather than short extremes. They look to temperature trends as the most reliable indicator of change, including Sea Surface Temperatures (SST). We can also make some points by looking at rainfall records.

First, the world has become hotter, especially since the 1960s. While there have been and will be outbreaks of cooler temperatures that bring blizzards and record snowfalls in parts of the world, the overall trend is towards higher temperatures. Indeed, this points to one of the gravest problems facing scientists attempting to educate the public. A killer cold snap in central United States, a record wet summer in Melbourne, or the hottest year on record in 1998, all establish peaks. But such events should not be confused with or be allowed to detract from an understanding of the long-term trend towards the global warming which is causing melting in the Arctic and Antarctic and of many glaciers and alpine peaks. While 173 people died in the Victorian Black Saturday bushfires in 2009, rather more died as a result of the heatwave of the preceding couple of weeks and which made the bush so tinder dry. It is the trend towards hotter days that we will notice in the future. The temperatures in the 2003 European heatwave that killed 30,000 people are likely to become quite common.

A major driver of changing and extreme weather is Sea Surface Temperatures and these are warming across most of the world's oceans. SST's in the western Pacific and in waters north of Australia play a major role in determining Australia's weather. SST's influence barometric pressures, winds, cloud formation, and precipitation, and a change in temperature of as little as one degree can have considerable impact on complex climate systems.

As a climate historian I have examined the Long Drought that impacted on eastern Australia from 1895–1903, the longest and most severe drought since European settlement until the drought that hit the same region from 1995–2010. Temperature and rainfall data show that it has been much hotter and rainfall far lower than in the Long Drought. The temperature record for Melbourne indicates

that eight of its nine hottest years have been since 1999—the only interloper was 1961. During the Long Drought there were hot periods, but overall it was rather cooler than in recent times, and no years feature in the hottest 10%. In Melbourne in the Long Drought there was below-average rain in only four of the eight years between 1896 and 1903, and a fifth year was only marginally above average. By contrast, in the twelve years between 1997 and 2009, not a single year reached the long-term average. From 1894–1905 (twelve years) a total of 10,990 mm fell in Melbourne. From 1997–2009 (thirteen years) it was a mere 6,690 mm, making it by far the longest and driest known dry sequence.

The implications are clear for Australia's ecology and economy—and remember, there is no healthy economy without a healthy environment. If these trends of droughts, floods, cyclones, and bushfires continue there will be an enormous impact on all botanical activities. Natural ecosystems will suffer since timeframes are too short to allow natural adaptation.

In the Murray-Darling Basin, Australia's food bowl, drought and then floods in the last fifteen years have devastated crop production and have forced many farmers off the land or placed them in jeopardy. There are outlandish suggestions of piping water from the wet north, or moving agriculture north, but both ideas falter in the face of economic and environmental realities. Food security is not guaranteed, even in Australia.

In our gardens there will be a great shift in what is grown. Micro-climates will move as places become hotter and wetter or hotter and drier. Changes will be diverse according to region, unpredictable and erratic. We will see more hardy and resilient indigenous plantings, while the range favourable to exotic favourites such as rhododendrons and azaleas will greatly shrink. Lawns will die and disappear, but concreting the yard will be even less attractive for most of us as we become more needful of cooling vegetation. But maybe we will grow mangoes in Melbourne?

Don Garden is an environmental historian. He is an honorary fellow at The University of Melbourne (Melbourne School of Land & Environment and School of Historical & Philosophical Studies) and is currently President of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies. His latest book *Droughts, Floods & Cyclones* is published by Australian Scholarly Publishing.

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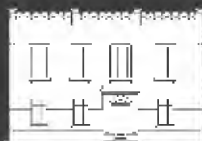
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Insights into Tasmania's cultural landscape: the conifer connection

Gwenda Sheridan

This article is an abridged version of the keynote address delivered to 'The Vision Splendid', 31st Annual National Conference of the Australian Garden History Society, Launceston, Tasmania, on 5 November 2010.

Part One (1600s–1800s)

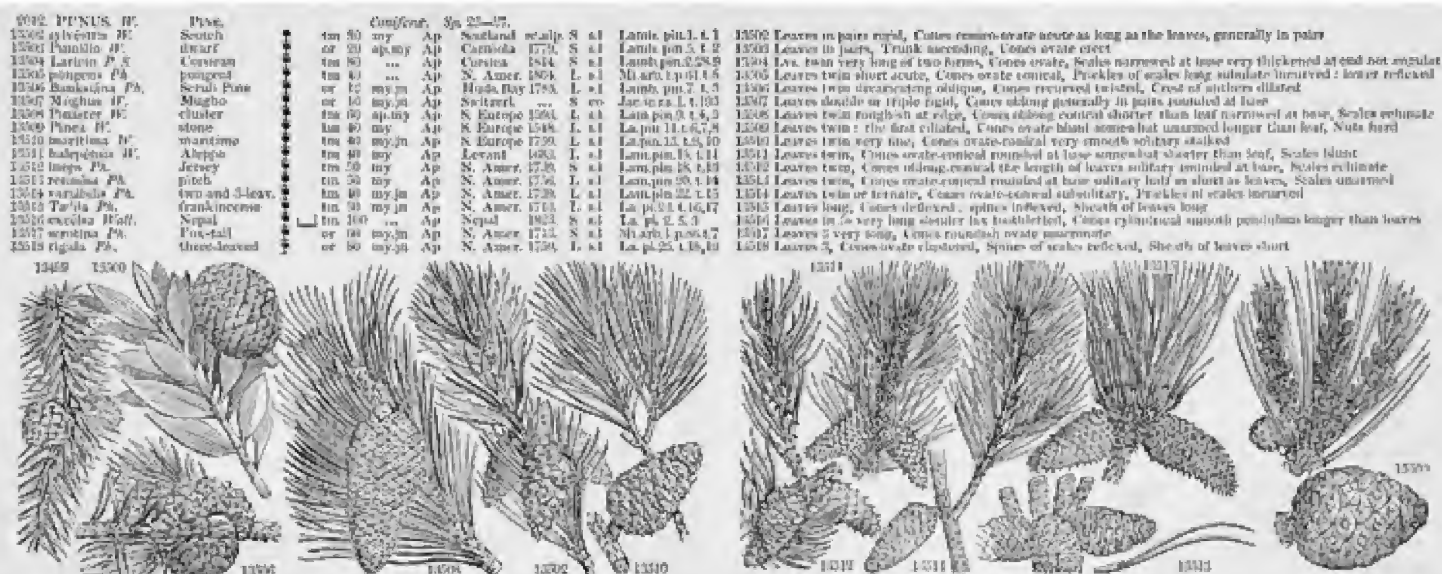
The story of Tasmania's exotic conifers commenced on the other side of the world in the mid-seventeenth century, with the founding of Britain's Royal Society (1660) and publication of *Sylva: a discourse on forest trees and propagation of timber in His Majesty's dominions* (1662) by founding member, John Evelyn. England in the time of Evelyn had very few conifers. Perhaps the yew was indigenous, along with limited imports of firs from northern Europe; *Pinus pinaster*, *Cedrus libani*, and *Cupressus sempervirens* from the Mediterranean; and the Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris*.

Utility was a principal consideration in the time of Evelyn but nearly 130 years later William Gilpin, in his *Remarks on Forest Scenery* (1791) wrote that 'it was no exaggerated praise to call a tree the grandest and most beautiful of all the productions of earth'. Trees were to be recognised for their innate beauty and were central to the 'ideal' landscape debate

that was pondered, argued, and discussed in elegant terms across more than one and a half centuries.

The debate interlinked art with landscape, architecture, literature, and poetry; and this to gardens and estate properties in England when the Industrial Revolution (with its consequent land use and landscape change) was in full flight. The terms 'sublime', 'beautiful', and 'picturesque', and what constituted 'good taste' and 'beauty' emerged, aided by excursions to the Scottish Highlands, Lake District, and Wye Valley. There was a continuing interest in the Grand European Tour, undertaken by increasing numbers of tourists.

The larch was also in England at the time of Gilpin although Wordsworth did not like the larch. He thought larch plantations caused 'injury' to the landscape, stating in his *Guide to the Lakes* (1810) that they were overrunning the hillsides, but additionally objected to the aesthetics of the larch.



The work of British botanist Aylmer Bourke Lambert, especially his book *A Description of the Genus Pinus* (1832), embraced the many new species arriving in Britain from North America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Conifers arrived too from other parts: the Corsican pine in 1814 and the Canary Island pine by 1815, dates noted by Loudon in his *Encyclopaedia of Plants* (1829). Just a few decades later, *Paxton's Botanical Dictionary* (1868) listed as many as 120 species of pine (including 35 from North America).

Part Two (1800–1850s)

Tasmania's early settled decades thus coincided exactly at a time when new species of conifers had attained a measure of significance in Britain. This related to the huge interest in botany at the time, from Banks at Kew, to London nurseries such as Loddiges and Veitch which became large in scale and had plant collectors combing the world for potentially rich economic plant discoveries.

The period 1800–59 was an era when Tasmania experienced considerable growth based on free settlement, becoming a place where overseas landscape ideas and ideals were adopted very quickly, one of which was commencement of a public pinetum.

A government garden (the third for southern Tasmania) was commenced in 1818 in the Domain (then called the Government Paddock) under the jurisdiction of Lieutenant Governor Arthur. He appointed a Superintendent and sent to London for a list of requisite plants in 1826. When they arrived in 1829, conifers were included in the mix of plants. Wordsworth's disliked larch was on the list, along with Scotch firs, a spruce fir, 100 Pinaster cones, and 50 Cedar of Lebanon cones. And notably

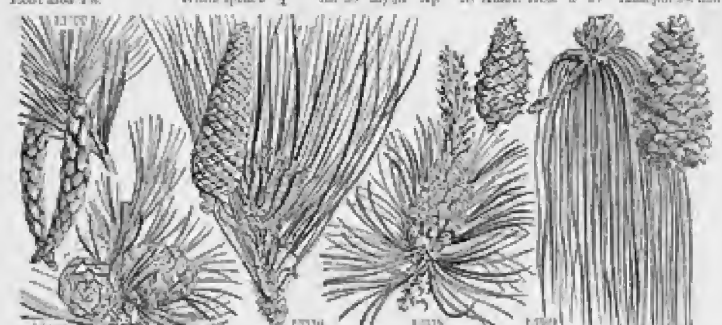
the Government Garden had obviously imported another conifer, the Norfolk Island pine praised by Mrs Markham in 1833 ('two beautiful Norfolk Pines ... the whole place had the air of a gentleman's garden'). German aristocrat and scientist Baron von Hugel, visiting in early 1834, noted 'the glorious site ... all kinds of fruit and vegetables in prime condition, few indigenous plants [but] two *Araucaria excelsa* drew my attention'.

But all was not well in the Garden. Superintendent Davidson lost his job in 1834, dismissed by Arthur, and later gardener Tobin too was dismissed by the succeeding administration of Sir John Franklin. When Lieutenant-Governor Eardley Wilmot arrived in 1843, Hobart's 'Botanic Garden' was lacking serious botanical, if not horticultural direction—there were at least five colonial gardens which all demanded the public purse for upkeep.

Eardley Wilmot had the delicate task of having to decide what would happen to the gardens. He convened a meeting with the Tasmanian Society—an existing scientific body—but there was hostility to the fees, to the existing position of the Tasmanian Society, as well as serious social and political divisions within the community. Many members of the Tasmanian Society withdrew in a body, so the meeting was adjourned. Eardley Wilmot however was committed to establishing a new and separate society with the eighteen men who remained. The former Government Garden in Hobart became the chief responsibility of the newly established Society, henceforth in charge of its upkeep and management and soon known as The Royal Society's Gardens.

In 1829 John Claudius Loudon published his *Encyclopaedia of Plants*. Of the list of 22 *Pinus* species in the 1836 edition, nine were from North America meaning very new species from the New World were beginning to make a noticeable appearance in England.

14519 <i>palustris</i> Pk.	swamp	†	tree 40	...	Ap	N. Amer. 1733.	S	sl	Lam. pin. 27, 120
14520 <i>canariensis</i> Roth.	Canary	†	tree 40	...	Ap	Canaries 1813.	S	sl	Pl. t. gen. c. 4.
14521 <i>longifolia</i> W.	long-leaved	†	tree 40	...	Ap	E. Indies 1801.	O	sl	Lam. pin. 28, 121
14522 <i>strobus</i> W.	Weymouth	†	tree 50	ap	Ap	N. Amer. 1705.	L	sl	Lam. pin. 31, 122
14523 <i>resinosa</i> W.	Siberian	†	tree 125	tree	Ap	Siberia 1746.	S	sl	Lam. pin. 34, 123



14524 <i>Abies balsamea</i> (Mill.) B.S.	Pin.	†	tree 100	tree	Ap	Sp. 10–12.	C	sl	Lam. pin. 37, 124
14525 <i>Pinus</i> Pk.	Double Balsam	†	tree 30	tree	Ap	Penang 1811.	C	sl	Lam. pin. 38, 125
14526 <i>Pinus</i> W.	Solva	†	tree 30	tree	Ap	Germany 1801.	L	sl	Lam. pin. 39, 126
14527 <i>Pinus</i> W.	Pinus of Cilind	†	tree 30	tree	Ap	N. Amer. 1705.	S	sl	Lam. pin. 40, 127
14528 <i>Pinus</i> Pk.	Hemlock spruce	†	tree 30	tree	Ap	N. Amer. 1705.	S	sl	Lam. pin. 41, 128
14529 <i>Pinus</i> W.	Pinus	†	tree 30	tree	Ap	Levant 1805.	S	sl	Lam. pin. c. 12.
14530 <i>Pinus</i> W.	Cedar	†	tree 30	tree	Ap	Levant 1805.	S	sl	Lam. pin. c. 12.
14531 <i>Pinus</i> W.	Norway spruce	†	tree 100	tree	Ap	N. Europe 1705.	S	sl	Lam. pin. 42, 129
14532 <i>Pinus</i> W.	White spruce	†	tree 30	tree	Ap	N. Amer. 1705.	S	sl	Lam. pin. 43, 130





Tasmania has some important indigenous conifers. These include Huon pine (was this the tree represented in Lycett's 'Scene up the River Huon' (1825) in his *Views in Australia?*) and Celery Top pine, Pencil pine and King Billy pine, the two latter two found in parts of the Central Highlands and the western area of the island. Dry forest conifers include South Esk pine, which is endangered, and Oyster Bay pine which in the nineteenth century was one of the most important sources of construction timber.

Meanwhile, the period of the Arthur administration had seen over a million acres of land alienated in Tasmania. Free settlers came in considerable numbers: theirs was a very different agenda to that of the convicts. Some took up large tracts of land and with convict help began to build very substantial dwellings and garden surrounds. Even in this penal colony in 1826 the *Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser* (17 June 1826) alerted its readers to the fact that the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* by 'Mr Loudon' was available.

Part Three (1840s–70s)

A Superintendent was appointed under the newly formed Royal Society; this was Francis Newman from the Lyndhurst garden in Sydney, whose tenure extended from 1845 until his death in 1859. Newman's lists of plants were either not kept or have not survived but there is a record of one to

Bishop Nixon at Runnymede (New Town) on 1 July 1857 which contained two Norfolk Island pines—one large existing Norfolk Island pine still remains at Runnymede.

Francis Newman commenced the first pinetum in Tasmania and possibly the first in Australia in a public garden. Confirmation for this occurs in a short sentence in the handwritten minutes of the Royal Society (7 March 1849). Photographed in 1858 and again in 1861, the trees (located alongside the reservoir—now the lake) had obviously grown well. A catalogue of plants in the Royal Society's Garden (published in 1857 although perhaps prepared as early as 1852) listed 134 'Coniferae' including 14 each of *Cupressus* and *Juniperus* species, 27 *Pinus*, and—notably—a 'Wellingtonia gigantea', the Giant Redwood from North America, a species only introduced into England in 1853. Annual reports of the Royal Society indicate that the pinetum continued to expand in respect of species into the garden, with a larger area required, this on the steep slope at the rear of the reservoir. Annual reports for 1864 and 1866 indicate that this ground was prepared and planted out 'for the continuation of the Pinetum'.

When William Archer became the Secretary of the Royal Society in 1860, the Society commenced recording plant sales to members (including nursery proprietors). As well, each year, it detailed plants



Charles Abbott's stereo photograph (1858) shows the newly established pinetum at the Royal Society's Gardens, Hobart, plantings made by superintendent Francis Newman (predecessor of the Society's long-time superintendent, and Abbott's younger brother, Francis).



Photo: Gwenda Shendan

Pinetum plantings of the 1860s survive in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, a legacy of the early colonial enthusiasm for conifers and the determination of custodians of the Royal Society's Gardens to nurture these significant plantings.

that had been sent to various public spaces across Tasmania. These included public parks like Franklin Square (Hobart), City Park and Prince's Square (Launceston), St John's Orphan School (and other schools), cemeteries, the Salmon Ponds at Plenty, Government House, and other government places, prison barracks, hospitals, the military barracks, and several municipal councils. A collection of trees sent to the then Deloraine Council between 1877–86, which likely included the Giant Redwood, can still be found along the West Parade, on the bank of the Meander River. They were immortalised by an image of Stephen Spurling in the early decades of the twentieth century.

One group receiving prolific plants from the Royal Society's Garden was the churches of different denominations, in rural as well as in urban areas. Anglican churches did very well and one of the most remarkable might be the Christ Church grounds at Longford (377 plants in the period 1870–74). The Archer family also gave plants to the church at Longford, specifically listed as '14 Coniferae'. Sadly the beautiful Giant Redwood which framed this church—said to be 80 metres high—was on the night of 7 October 2002 struck by lightning: the top two thirds of the tree apparently exploded and blasted debris across the churchyard (*Examiner*, 9/10/02).

It is possible to detect specific patterns in historical landscape research. The pattern whereby deciduous and coniferous species were planted in juxtaposition is found very early in colonial art. In an 1833 landscape painting by William Lyttleton of the Archer properties Woolmers and Brickendon (still held in family hands) this pattern is apparent. It provided stunning contrasts, diversity, and colour change (particularly in spring and in autumn). It is still a pattern evident even in church yards, sometimes along driveways (seen, for instance, at Eskleigh), and in public parks. It was a pattern that suited the emerging fashion for garden design, one that lent itself to emerging new botanical species, and contributed to the perception of trees for beauty and pleasure as well as utilitarian purposes.

Francis Abbott succeeded Francis Newman in 1859 and maintained directorship of the Royal Society's Garden until 1903. He kept 'Account Sales Books'—two survive covering the 1860s to 1890s—which are a veritable gold mine of exactly what conifers went where, to whom, and when. Royal Society members, many of whom had estate or town properties, certainly availed themselves of the opportunity to purchase conifers. The genera *Pinus* and *Cupressus* are more numerous in the sales books than other conifers. The lists of plants sent

12	<i>Podla Melaleuca</i>
12	<i>Fraxinus & homophylloides</i>
12	<i>Cupressus wholestem</i>
12	<i>Pinus Maritima</i>
12	<i>Pinus Halapensis</i>
12	<i>Pinus Massoniana</i>
12	<i>Cupressus McRabensis</i>
12	<i>Decid. Quercus</i>
12	<i>Decid. Nordmanniana</i>
12	<i>Cryptomeria elegans</i>
12	<i>Wellingtonia gigantea</i>
12	<i>Cupressus Bruni</i>
12	<i>Cupressus torulosa</i>
12	<i>Taxus adpressa</i>
12	<i>Taxus baccata aurea</i>
12	<i>Taxus baccata</i>
12	<i>Cephalotaxa Fortunei</i>
12	<i>Retinospora erubescens</i>
12	<i>Retinospora filicoides</i>
12	<i>Retinospora plumosa</i>
12	<i>Pinus densiflora</i>
12	<i>Abies balsamea</i>
12	<i>Podla Aurea</i>
12	<i>Juniperus Virginiana</i>
12	<i>Pinus Serrata</i>
12	<i>Cordyline Australis</i>
12	<i>Podla elegantissima</i>
12	<i>Pinus Austriaca</i>
12	<i>408 plants sent £ 5.00</i>

Local nursery proprietors and seed importers such as Creswell and Lipscombe (part of whose order is shown here) also availed themselves of plants from the Royal Society Garden. What the lists also indicate is that if conifers were not purchased directly from the Royal Society's Gardens by members there was a reasonable chance that they came via the additional loop of nursery providers but from the same original source.

Courtesy Royal Society of Tasmania

Part Four (1870s-1930s)

The increased interest in and use of conifers was intimately connected with making Tasmania more beautiful. For example in 1875 the Royal Society had decided to 'improve' the landscape of the Queen's Domain. Decades of over-use by animals had seen overgrazing and dead trees; as well there were a number of former ugly quarries. Francis Abbott, in an 1875 paper to the Society, flagged that the Gardens had simply run out of space for its plants; he wanted to create a second pinetum outside the Royal Society's Garden. This took some time, however, as it had to have parliament's blessing, but by the early 1890s much of the 'improvement' had been achieved and this included the widespread planting of conifer species. Some of those still remain in the Queen's Domain and a few are quite unusual, if not rare in Australia.

Tasmania continued to make itself 'beautiful', principally for tourist eyes, and this resulted in a somewhat unusual strand to the conifer planting which took place in the early decades of the twentieth century. Such planting

out build in numbers of conifers from 1860 onwards: a 'Wellingtonia gigantea' (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) was first sent out in July 1862; *Pinus insignis* (later *P. radiata*—see cover illustration) by 1865.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, John Latham in his nursery catalogue indicated how the different trees could be used, along with what soils and conditions might best suit. Thus *Cryptomeria* was a 'handsome tree in sheltered, moist places', *Abies* succeeded best in 'moist cool situations', the *Pinus* genera was the species 'remarkable for being less affected by droughts or north winds than any other exotic trees and they grow rapidly', the *Wellingtonia* was described as 'the mammoth tree' and could cost up to 5/- each (much more expensive than other conifers, which mostly ranged from 1/6 to 2/-). Latham offered 'Special Lines' in '*Pinus insignis*', a popular windbreak planting.

was a part of the perception that Tasmania was the 'Garden State' of Australia. Ordered fields, boundary and internal lines of conifers, plantings around buildings, and estate arboreta were all a part of this perception. William Senior, actually a fishing commentator, may have commenced the 'garden' concept for Tasmania, when he visited and commented upon the Norfolk Plains in 1880, but certainly by 1912, Tasmania was being described by the Tasmanian Tourist Association in its *Beautiful Tasmania* compendium as 'a land of beauty and had been well named The Garden of the South'.

Meanwhile the Royal Society was pursuing a very different line of thought; conifer planting for commercial softwood value. It may have been Victorian Government Botanist Ferdinand von Mueller who commenced the commercial softwood thinking in 1893. He proposed planting the

leading lumber pines of North America but he also advocated the Scots pine because of Tasmania's cool climate. The Royal Society, its Garden Superintendent John Wardman (who followed Abbott), and Government Botanist Leonard Rodway were key local proponents in moving perception towards a commercial foundation and the beginnings of a forestry industry.

the first object was to grow trees to supply landholders for shade and shelter purposes; timber plantations were a secondary consideration

Initially though it was a gentle approach, a genuine 'improvement to the landscape' approach. Leonard Rodway outlined publicly in 1907 that the first object was to grow trees to supply landholders for shade and shelter purposes; timber plantations were a secondary consideration (*Mercury*, 5/12/07). As well as shade and shelter, trees would beautify the landscape, and ultimately supply valuable timber. Specifically mentioned were *Pinus insignis* (syn *P. radiata*) and *Cupressus lambertiana* (syn *C. macrocarpa*).

Such trees were fast growers, not fussy about soil or rainfall, so were seen to have clear advantages over indigenous conifers, which grew very slowly. A nursery was established and a three-person Forest Board set up, with Rodway by 1909 a member of this. He noted that Tasmania had the finest collection of softwood trees in Australia, growing in its botanic garden. He further noted that Australia imported about 2 million pounds worth of softwoods a year and that all this timber could be grown in Tasmania.

An early established nursery was on the side of the Sandy Bay Rivulet at Ridgeway on the mid slopes of Mount Wellington but this was abandoned by 1911 due to lack of funds. By this date the Department of Agriculture had taken over management of the state afforestation programme and its nurseries (*Mercury*, 7/1/11).

This early decade of the twentieth century was significant as the activities of the Forest Board and Department of Agriculture continued. Trees were distributed to public bodies for 'street planting' and to state schools free of charge. Species consisted predominantly of conifers. By 1912 notices in the press stated that trees were available for distribution (*Mercury*, 2/3/12). These notices continued into 1913 and indicate that thousands of trees may have been despatched. These included

Douglas fir (3000), maritime pine (1500) radiata pine (1500), and Scots pine (2500), while deciduous trees distributed were far fewer in number (*Mercury*, 7/6/13).

By 1919–20—following World War 1—conifer afforestation re-emerged very much re-invigorated and with a core purpose in mind. L.G. Irby had been appointed as Tasmania's Forest Conservator in 1919 and he wasted no time; he wanted an audit (*Mercury*, 17/10/19). Almost immediately there was talk of 'wastelands' in Tasmania and what they could be used for. Australia's softwood needs now cost the nation £3,000,000 (*Mercury*, 8/5/20). The 1920 *Forestry Act* was operational by 1922. This made provision for a Forestry Department and just over a year later, the first state forest was proclaimed; 12,000 acres on the West Coast. This was a 'wide stretch of sand dunes, a treeless waste', seen as 'ideal for the luxuriant growth of conifers, and with a copious rainfall'. Such areas were to be 'turned into productive areas of incalculable value



Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office

In August 1922, the Tasmanian Government Tourist Bureau in its *Picturesque Tasmania* journal carried a story of the 'reclamation of the waste child life of the Empire'. They would be placed in colonies of 200 'waif' lads, would be allotted 20,000 acres of land, could plant out annually 800 acres of conifers, and in 25 years each 'colony' would bring in an income of two hundred thousand pounds. Dr Bernado's was seen as the supervising entity but the enterprise foundered.

in preparing Tasmania to carry a large and thriving population' (*Mercury*, 14/11/21).

This was the vision. It was not aimed at beauty of the 'Garden State', of farm shelter belts, or even a modest utility of conifer sawlogs for home production. It was large scale in its ambitions, and one seeing large scale economic return.

Conclusion

Mercifully, the 'wastelands' did not co-operate and neither did the Commonwealth Government, while the depression saw a lack of funds for silviculture planting. Certain early plantations were described in some quarters as a failure, or worse as an absolute waste of public money. The Tasmanian cultural landscape nevertheless, still bears testimony to this failed dream, for example in the far south of the state.

Conifers are integral to the older settled Tasmanian landscapes, especially its rural landscapes.

Conifers are integral to the older settled Tasmanian landscapes, especially its rural landscapes. Their forms, textures, colours, and aesthetic contribution are entirely different to the Tasmanian flora and its constituent landscapes of which they have now become part. There is a national wealth attached to this living heritage, which can occur as boundary or internal lines of properties, in arboreta of old homesteads, as single trees, along driveways, isolated in paddocks, along roadways, almost it seems, anywhere. To return to the specific meaning of the Sublime and to Gilpin we are left with a vision of grandeur, beauty, awe, even life itself so that 'it is no exaggerated praise to call a tree the grandest and most beautiful of all the productions of the earth'.

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Gwenda Sheridan is a Tasmanian-based heritage consultant whose wide interests revolve around cultural landscapes, a legacy of her early training as a geographer. Over the last decade and a half she has undertaken studies of many of the state's most culturally significant gardens and designed landscapes.

From Head's Nook to the high plains: Winifred Waddell and the Native Plants Preservation Society of Victoria

Robin Marks

English-born teacher Winifred Waddell (1884–1972) was the force behind the Native Plants Preservation Society of Victoria—an organisation and an inspiration figure that have hitherto received little historical recognition.

On Wednesday, 16 August 1972, a small piece appeared in the Melbourne *Herald* reporting that 'The founder of the Victorian Native Plants Preservation Society, Miss Winifred Waddell, died on Monday night.' Her occupation listed on her death certificate was 'Not any'.

On 3 October 1991, the Australian Securities and Investment Commission received an application from the Native Plants Preservation Society of Victoria for De-registration of a Defunct Company and it was subsequently de-registered on 27 February 1992, almost twenty years after Miss Waddell died.

Who was this woman and what was the background to her forming the Native Plants Preservation Society, a community-based society that made such a major contribution to Australian native plants and their preservation in this country?

Winifred Ellen Waddell was born on 8 October 1884 at Head's Nook, near Carlisle, in the north of England. She was the eldest of four children—two

sons and two daughters—of James Waddell. He was a woollen manufacturer who owned Glencairn Woollen Mill at Head's Nook. Her sister, Annie Maud, was an excellent water colourist known as 'Todd' by Daphne du Maurier, whose tutor, advisor, and companion Annie became over many years.

Head's Nook is a small village surrounded by beautiful rural properties where sheep graze and the meadows and trees are luxurious in a way virtually unknown in our sunburnt country. Horse riding was a normal part of rural life in the nineteenth century and Miss Waddell became a proficient horsewoman during her childhood. On 18 December 1894 she commenced her schooling at Carlisle High School for Girls, where she remained for almost nine years. She received numerous prizes during that time and achieved a Higher School Certificate in English, French, botany, and mathematics, all of which were to play a part in her achievements throughout life.

A book entitled *Illustrations of The British Flora: a series of wood engravings with dissection of British plants* (1901) by W.H. Fitch and W.G. Smith was amongst the possessions she subsequently brought with her to Australia. It is stamped with the seal of Carlisle High School. She has hand-coloured, with water colour, a number of the engravings—an indication of her early interest in not only botany, but also in painting.

In 1903 Miss Waddell entered Royal Holloway College, University of London, completing an Intermediate Science course in her first year in pure mathematics, applied mathematics, botany and physics. She graduated in 1906, with a Class II London BSc Hons in mathematics, winning a University prize in applied mathematics in that year.



The Waddell family home at Head's Nook, near Carlisle, in England's north, photographed during Winifred's childhood.



Winifred Waddell's travelling trunks, evocative reminders of her emigration in 1915–16 from Carlisle to Melbourne.

In the same year she sat for a public examination at the Honour School of Mathematics at the University of Oxford, being awarded a First Class Honour. She was unable to obtain a degree for that achievement as the University of Oxford did not commence awarding degrees to woman until some years later.

On graduation from Royal Holloway College Miss Waddell taught at a number of schools in the United Kingdom until the end of 1915, when she applied for and was appointed to the position of Senior Mathematical Mistress at Melbourne Church of England Girls' Grammar School (Merton Hall). She departed from London on the ship *Media* on Christmas Eve 1915 and commenced teaching at the school in February 1916. She remained there until her retirement in 1942, having been Chief of Staff (1935–41) and acting Head Mistress (1937–38). During her time at the school she was appointed as an External Examiner in Mathematics at the University of Melbourne. She wrote a text book, *A First Trigonometry* (1919), in association with D.K. Pichen, Master of Ormond College.

Correspondence in the Merton Hall school records, along with interviews with a number of her former pupils, reveals a very strong, independent and single-minded woman. She did not tolerate fools—telling those who were not interested or not competent in mathematics that they 'might like to think about taking up French'. In 1926,

Miss Waddell was described in an article in the Melbourne *Argus* as being 'regarded by those competent to judge, as the most brilliant woman mathematician we have in this country'.

So, that is the background to Miss Waddell's professional development. How did it develop into her love for Australian native plants and a fierce devotion to their preservation in their native habitat?

She loved the mountains and the native flora—photographing and painting them while she was there. In particular, her favourite area was in the region of Mount Howitt and amongst her favourite plants was a tall pink and white variety of alpine everlasting daisy which grew very well in that area.

She decided to propagate Australian native plants at her home in Toorak. Although she struggled with some varieties, she managed to create an outstanding native garden with many varieties, including some orchids, naturalising in her long back garden with its small path winding its way through an abundance of native species varying from tiny orchids to a huge mountain ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*).

Below and opposite: Whilst at Merton Hall, Miss Waddell followed her interest in horse riding and painting by spending her summer school holidays during the 1920s and 1930s riding in the high plains of the Australian Alps (pictured opposite resting with her horse 'Nugget'). She met the cattlemen who had been there for generations and rode with them, camping for days on end, either alone or accompanied (on occasion, by one of her pupils from Merton Hall).





Waddell Collection, State Library of Victoria

She realised the fragile nature of native flora and the risk to its survival due to human habitation and introduced animals such as rabbits. When she finished at Merton Hall she decided to dedicate the rest of her life to increasing public awareness of these special plants and taking what steps might be possible to preserve them in their native habitat.

Winifred Waddell was tireless in her activities to recruit people whom she thought could assist in her aims. One of these was James H. Willis, from the National Herbarium in Melbourne, who became a lifelong friend and supporter. In 1946 he acted as a

referee for her appointment as an Honorary Ranger in the Forests Commission of Victoria under the *Wild Flowers and Native Plants Protection Act*.

In 1947 Waddell joined the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. By 1949, with the support and assistance there of Arthur Swaby, she had succeeded in establishing a separate section of the Club—the Wildflower Preservation Group. There were regular reports from this group about its activities over the next few years in the *Victorian Naturalist* (journal of the FNCV). These included the particular aim of establishing native plant sanctuaries.



In 1949, the first sanctuary was established at Tallarook, an event attended by many local dignitaries and reported in an article Waddell (third from right) wrote in *Wild Life*, the Australian nature magazine, the following year.

One of the important components of the sanctuaries that Waddell was promoting was the need for them to have well formed, strong fences sufficient to keep out the feet of 'rabbits, cattle and other heavy animals, including humans'. I recall visiting many of these sanctuaries as a child, with my mother, ensuring that the fences were intact and removing introduced weeds where possible.

By 1951 she realised that there were many members the Wildflower Preservation Group who were not members of the Field Naturalists Club. It was time for an independent society: the Native Plants Preservation Society of Victoria ('Pres' to Miss Waddell) to enhance her aims. This became a reality in 1952 and the new Society met regularly at her home in Toorak after that, with Waddell as Secretary.

The range of activities of the Society grew enormously. They included public education; education in schools; recruiting government at all levels and other organisations responsible for allocation of land for sanctuaries; formation of management committees for maintenance of the sanctuaries once they were established; publication of promotional materials, pamphlets, and booklets that were disseminated widely, particularly in schools and elsewhere; writing numerous articles in magazines; and writing a regular column, 'Bushland Notes', in the 'Junior Section' of the *Age* newspaper

(which Waddell contributed anonymously).

The Society also developed an annual native plant photographic competition entitled PhotoFlora.



Photo: Robin Marks

In 1968, J.H. Willis co-authored with G. R. Cochrane, B. A. Fuhrer and E. R. Rotherham a book entitled *Flowers and Plants of Victoria* in which he included the alpine everlasting daisy of which Waddell was so fond. He had managed to have it renamed *Helichrysum adenophorum* var. *waddellia* 'Waddell Everlasting', in her honour.



Private collection

Winifred Waddell photographed with an arrangement of Australian flora during the latter years of her life.

A substantial proportion of these activities was produced directly or was driven by the personal efforts of Winifred Waddell, including the fund raising required to underpin them. All of them continued for 20 years after her death, until the Society finally dissolved.

She decided that there was a need for a well-illustrated book *Wild Flowers of Victoria* and she recruited Jean Galbraith to write it. It was first published in 1950. Miss Galbraith wrote in her Preface: 'Miss Winifred Waddell, who thought of it, has helped in every way. She has also arranged the photographs, written the



Promotional flyer published by the Native Plants Preservation Society of Victoria in the late 1950s.

orchid section and revised every page except this one, studying the descriptions and suggesting a great many improvements.' Comments like that, as clear evidence of Waddell's dedication, are seen throughout the limited correspondence and other materials that are still available.

In 1964 the Field Naturalists Club of

Victoria awarded Winifred Waddell the Natural History Medallion, the highest award of the Club given annually to a person of outstanding merit. In the same year she received an MBE, whose citation concluded 'Miss Waddell's vision and enthusiasm have ensured the preservation of native flora which otherwise might have been lost forever'.

By 1966, when ill health finally forced her to reduce her active role in the Society, there were over 72 sanctuaries (20 of them in schools) and numerous reserves spread throughout Victoria, each with a committee of management.

Eventually Miss Waddell—a smoker all her life as well as enjoying a regular drop of muscat and sweet sherry—became so frail that she could no longer maintain her home and its beautiful native garden. She moved to a nursing home in 1971 and died the following year. The property was sold at public auction and her garden was immediately destroyed in its entirety by the new owner, who replaced it with lawn, introduced shrubs, flower beds, and a concrete path.

The Native Plants Preservation Society raised a memorial fund, which it used to produce a book, *Wild Flower Diary*, in Waddell's name, edited by Jean Galbraith and illustrated by Elizabeth Cochrane. It was a compilation of her articles published in the *Junior Age* in the years 1960–64, giving monthly accounts of what plants are flowering during that month. It is an easily read and useful companion for anyone bush walking and interested in native plants in Victoria, at any time of the year. A collection was also taken up at Merton Hall and

used to perpetuate her memory there in the Winifred Waddell Prize in Mathematics awarded annually.

Alongside these memorials stand all those sanctuaries and reserves for which she and the Society were responsible, many of which remain and are well cared for today. Her enthusiasm for native plant preservation, which she transmitted to everyone around her whom she thought might be interested, has also spread and remains today. It goes without saying now that Australian native plant preservation is a vital part of maintaining Australia's heritage—something that was not the norm when Miss Waddell arrived in 1916.

In the summer following her death, and according to the wish expressed in her Will, a party of horse riders was organised by Mr Alex Trahair, for many years her walking and riding companion in the Alps. They used horses from the well-known high plains cattle family, the Lovicks, one member of whom she was especially fond, Jack Lovick, and with whom she rode in the high plains over those years. They rode up Mount Howitt where, following a quiet ceremony, her ashes were scattered in her beloved mountains surrounded by her beloved plants—a final home for an outstanding woman who did so much to preserve them for our future generations.

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Robin Marks is Professor of Dermatology at The University of Melbourne. His mother, Valma Marks, was a very close personal friend of Winifred Waddell in the NPPSV and a trustee of her estate. Professor Marks has had a lifelong interest in Australian plants and their preservation. This article is based on a lecture to the AGHS (Victorian Branch) on 17 August 2010.

Explorations in landscape design theory: designed landscapes and cultural landscapes

Jeannie Sim

Two earlier articles in this series examined the terms 'landscape' (AGH, 20 (4) 2009) and 'garden' (21 (3), 2010) and this concluding part considers the terms 'designed landscapes' and 'cultural landscapes', concepts underpinning the mission statement of the Australian Garden History Society.

Designed landscapes

The term 'designed landscape' encompasses all those landscapes consciously created by humans, such as parks and gardens, in both rural and urban situations. Definitions and understandings of 'created' and 'designed' are the key elements involved in this term. Questions that require answering are complex. Does a farmer 'design' a farm? Does an engineer or factory operator 'design' an industrial site? Is a Town Plan a landscape design?

This term was adopted by members of the research project, *A Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in Australia* (1997), to reflect a more specific field of interest than the broader term 'cultural landscape', of which designed landscapes are a part. The funding body for the study, the Australian Heritage Commission, noted in the brief that the term 'designed landscapes' had been developed by the World Heritage Convention in an attempt to discriminate between the different cultural landscapes (which at its broadest interpretation could mean the entire world). The World Heritage Convention proposed the following categories:

- (i) organically evolved landscapes being relict landscapes (whereby past use has come to an end) and continuing landscapes (a continuing landscape, actively used and associated with a traditional way of life);
- (ii) associative cultural landscape being places with religious, artistic or cultural associations; and

- (iii) designed landscapes being those designed and created intentionally by man [*sic*], embracing garden and parkland landscapes constructed for aesthetic reasons which are often (but not always) associated with religious or other monumental buildings and ensembles.

This definition has several distinct flaws in its attempt to classify landscapes (apart from unfortunate gender-laden language). The emphasis on monumental buildings and associated landscapes is both biased towards one social class and also towards architectural design, rather than landscape design as a distinct and stand-alone creative entity. Similarly, landscapes are designed for more than just aesthetic reasons and acquire over time, a much more complex combination of cultural meanings, all of which contribute to the way human beings value places.

Various disciplines are involved in designing landscapes. Landscape architects are the professionals who readily spring to mind for designing landscapes in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in Australia and elsewhere. However, the influence of town and regional planners and urban designers must also be considered. Similarly, history shows that architects have often participated in creating individual pieces (buildings) and precincts (settings) within the urban context. Engineers have laid out rail, road, and service corridors over landscapes, as well as creating dams and reservoirs and draining swamps. Garden designers and horticulturists are contributors as well.

While all these professionals are easily identifiable, the ordinary (general) landscape indicates that there are other forces at work. The distinctions between professional and amateur should be explored here.

Literary, architectural, and art historians have long traditions within their disciplines of assigning authorship to created entities. Garden historians have continued this practice. Geographers are newcomers to the study of individuals affecting landscapes and have added other interpretations of landscapes altered by human. In that authoritative collection of essays edited by D.W. Meinig, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (1979), several geographers discuss 'reading the landscape' and the context—social and physical—that has framed the creative process of individual people. In his essay, geographer Marwyn S. Samuels explored culpability and causal factors in his essay, and introduced the terms 'biography of landscape' and 'authored landscape'. From his geographer's point of view, Samuels was concerned with the contexts that underscore self-expression, and contended:

We cannot ignore the 'facts' of limited culpability, because it is only through some context—invariably not self-determined, if often or always self-interpreted—that individuals express their particularity and partiality. At the same time, however, we cannot safely ignore such particularity and partiality—the stuff of subjectivity—lest we lose the authors and their meanings in the context. [Meinig (1979), p.63]

Historians could argue that their broad views of events and causes have long been cognisant of context as applied to history. Landscape historians and historical ecologists are particularly experienced in these matters, working within dynamic, process-rich systems that combine natural and cultural forces. However Samuels also discusses the twin modes of individual expression concerning landscapes: 'a world imagined, and a world lived-in (between the world of mind and the world of reality)'. He thus offers a way of studying landscape biography (authorship) based on landscape 'impressions' and landscape 'expressions', which both require 'an author in context and are different products of authorship' [Meinig (1979), pp.69–70].

Landscape historian J.B. Jackson wrote many essays about landscape and heritage, especially within the American context. In his compilation, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (1984), he identified several kinds of 'authorship' involved with landscapes. 'Whatever definition of landscape we finally reach',

he noted, 'to be serviceable it will have to take into account the ceaseless interaction between the ephemeral, the mobile, the vernacular on the one hand, and the authority of legally established, premeditated permanent forms on the other' [Jackson (1984), p.148].

Jackson brings into sharp focus the dynamic qualities of landscape in his studies and writings. He also argues for the recognition of vernacular landscapes as a product of humanity, with these characteristics:

that its spaces are usually small, irregular in shape, subject to rapid change in use, in ownership, in dimensions; that the houses, even the villages themselves, grow shrink, change morphology, change location; that there is always a vast amount of 'common land'—waste, pasturage, forest, areas where natural resources are exploited in a piecemeal manner; that its roads are little more than paths and lanes, never maintained and rarely permanent; finally that the vernacular landscape is a scattering of hamlets and clusters of fields, islands in a sea of waste or wilderness changing from generation to generation, leaving no monuments, only abandonment or signs of renewal. [Jackson (1984), p.151]

Such vernacular landscapes are usually considered part of that broad term, cultural landscapes. 'Theoretically, the recognition that the meanings of NATURE itself vary between cultures means that it offers no single, stable object for study in cultural geography' wrote cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove in the *Dictionary of Human Geography* (1994). 'Thus all landscapes may be regarded as cultural, even in their "natural" state. Although landscape thus remains a significant concept within cultural geography, in terms of usage, the phrase cultural landscape usually still implies the traditional Sauerian concept.' [Cosgrove (1994), p.115]

Cultural landscapes

The term 'cultural landscape' means different things to different people, and to different disciplines. It was originally coined by American geographer Carl O. Sauer in the 1920s to describe the changes that have been wrought by humankind on the Earth. Sauer's original ideas and interpretation in meaning for this term was captured in the following description by Cosgrove:

The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result. Under the influence of a



The view from Flirtation Hill, on the western slopes of New South Wales near Gulgong—with its patterning generated by long-standing agricultural uses overlaid on the natural topography—typifies a cultural landscape of traditional Australian farming.

given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases, and probably reaching ultimately the end of its cycle of development. With the introduction of a different—that is, alien—culture, a rejuvenation of the cultural landscapes sets in, or a new landscapes is superimposed on remnants of an older one.

[Cosgrove (1994), p.114]

The dynamic process included in this explanation shows that history (as accrued change) is an important aspect of any understanding of landscape. The significance to geographers of the term ‘cultural landscape’ has both evolved and expanded since Sauer’s original coining. As Cosgrove notes, Sauer was seeking the tangible (physical) evidence of the effects of culture on natural landscape, but other less tangible issues are also at stake. ‘It is clear in Sauer’s model that he regarded visible forms as the principal features for study in the cultural landscapes, and that his approach to it was highly empirical’ wrote Cosgrove. ‘More recent work has paid greater attention to non-material aspects of culture, examining the role of beliefs, attitudes and expectations in shaping cultural environments.’ [Cosgrove (1994), pp.114–15]

Postmodernist theorists, according to geographer Eugene Palka, have widened the applicability of ‘landscape’ for cultural research: ‘Landscape as “text” refers to the capacity of any landscape to provide a biography of its occupants and to reveal hints of the processes by which it has evolved over time.’ [Palka (1995), p.70] From these ideas about re-reading or reinterpreting physical forms comes

perhaps the most notable progress in expanding the perceptual and conceptual understanding of landscapes and humans, namely the establishment of iconographic theory. Daniel Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels describe their approach to cultural landscapes in their influential work *The Iconography of Landscape* (1988):

a landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings. This is not to say that landscapes are immaterial. They may be represented in a variety of materials and on many surfaces—in paint on canvas, in writing on paper, in earth, stone, water and vegetation on the ground.

[Cosgrove & Daniels (1988), p.1]

Another way of regarding the landscape is as a palimpsest, a document on which earlier, partly erased, writing could still be discerned.

Observations and descriptions written by some post-World War Two scholars have led to practitioners in other disciplines becoming interested in the topic of cultural landscapes. Landscape historians W.G. Hoskins (England) and J.B. Jackson (USA)—and others since—have explored their respective national countrysides and vernacular landscapes. They have reviewed the meanings of their homelands and subsequently rewritten their histories in new ways. Studies of cultural landscape have become whole new approaches to writing history, in which historical layers of human settlement and agriculture have been considered in describing the composite entity we see today.

A specialist in this natural—cultural interface is the British scholar, Oliver Rackham, whose basic approach was to combine investigations of material evidence (including ‘historical ecology’) and documentary research applied to rural landscapes.

English historian and landscape archaeologist, Christopher Taylor, recently provided useful ‘Introductions and Commentary’ to a republication of Hoskins’ famous 1955 study, *The Making of the English Landscape*. In his preliminary statements, Taylor introduced a key concept of change in relation to the landscape: ‘Another aspect of the English landscape is that its story, even if unclear, has one over-riding feature about which we can be absolutely sure, namely that it has always been changing.’ This change is due to the combined actions of natural and cultural forces, expressed upon the landscape. This conception of the English landscape is what we experience now, continued Taylor, ‘and our interpretation of it must be the result of a balance between both these concepts of revolution and of continuity and change’. [Hoskins (1992), pp.8–9]

*The concept of cultural
landscape ... embodies a dynamic
understanding of history*

This notion of *all* landscapes being cultural is particularly pertinent to Australia’s long cultural heritage (at least 40,000 years). However, the same is true of most of the world which has been inhabited by humans for thousands of years, entailing physical and cultural management of the landscape. Even Antarctica has acquired a cultural heritage this century, which also reveals the connection between cultural heritage and history. In conclusion, the project ‘Investigating Queensland’s cultural landscapes’ (2001), devised another definition of cultural landscapes:

The cultural landscape is constantly evolving, humanised, landscape. It consists of a dialectic between the natural physical setting, the human modifications to that setting, and the meanings of the resulting landscape to insiders and outsiders. Continuous interaction between these three elements takes place over time. Cultural landscapes can be represented as stories, myths and beliefs, which may be applied to all landscapes including wilderness landscapes, ordinary landscapes or designed landscapes. The concept of cultural landscape therefore embodies a dynamic understanding of history, in which past, present and future are seamlessly connected. [Armstrong (2001), p.13]

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Jeannie Sim is a Brisbane-based landscape architect and garden historian, and a senior lecturer at Queensland University of Technology.

ENNZ: *Environment and Nature in New Zealand*

<http://environmentalhistory-au-nz.org/new-zealand/>

The devastating earthquake which struck Christchurch, New Zealand, on 22 February 2011, caused widespread loss of life and destruction to property. Heritage buildings suffered significant damage, and it is likely damage to historic gardens will be significant. The Ohinetahi homestead and garden of architect Sir Miles Warren, for example, suffered considerable damage, toppling pillars in his award-winning garden. Elsewhere liquefaction is likely to have dealt a severe blow to other gardens but, as yet, the full extent of the damage is not known. 'The greatest present danger to historic buildings—and gardens—seems to come from the cavalier attitude of the "Earthquake Minister" Gerry Brownlie', writes our correspondent James Beattie from the History Department of the University of Waikato, 'who created uproar when he recently demanded the removal of most of Christchurch's old buildings. The difficulty facing garden historians is that most people, heritage professionals included, tend to focus on structures and overlook gardens: the lobby of subscribers to this journal is therefore important in ensuring the survival of heritage gardens.'

James Beattie's recent research forces us to think afresh about the place of gardens in the wider environment, and especially the ways that cultural forces have worked alongside natural phenomena in creating the designed landscapes that make New Zealand—and Australasia more generally—so distinctive. New Zealand shares with Australia an indigenous / colonial / post-colonial history and in recent issues of *Australian Garden History* we have reviewed excellent national garden histories by Matthew Bradbury (1995) and Bee Dawson (2010). Beattie has placed his recent focus on the themes of Chinese and other Asian influence on New Zealand gardens and on the global imperatives of environmentalism.

Beattie's edited volume *Lan Yuan: the garden of enlightenment* (2008) comprises essays on the intellectual, cultural, and architectural background to the Dunedin Chinese Garden, and place many of his concerns within the context of a single garden project. (A limited number of copies of this book are still available: contact jbeattie@waikato.ac.nz) Wider ramifications of these Asian influences are

canvassed in Beattie's prolific writings—and we look forward to seeing the forthcoming special Australasian issue of *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* (which he is guest editing with Australian author and academic Katie Holmes) in which he enlarges on this topic.

James Beattie is also the founding (and current) editor of *ENNZ: Environment and Nature in New Zealand* and since 2006 this has provided a vehicle for promoting the second thread of his research. If Australian garden historians bemoan a lack of critical mass for scholarly pursuits in their chosen area, spare a thought for the far smaller body of historians in New Zealand. What the country might lack in relative scale, however, is easily compensated by intensity of endeavour, and the web-based ENNZ journal is clear proof of this. Hosted by the Australian & New Zealand Environmental History Network, this journal is available as a downloadable PDF—Volume 5, Number 1, July 2010 is the most recent posting; other back issues are also available.



Environment and Nature in New Zealand is published to link people interested in its broad scope, including those with interests in environmental history, landscape studies, literature and the environment, garden history, history of science, treaty history, and heritage issues. Its framework is well suited to this scope, and would make an excellent model for an Australian web-based journal of similar ambition. Other postings on the wider Australian & New Zealand Environmental History Network website form an excellent complement to the more focussed content of *ENNZ*. As you browse, make a note to look out for James Beattie's next book, *Empire and Environmental Anxiety*, which is due to be published by Palgrave Macmillan later this year, and spare a thought for our New Zealand colleagues as they grapple with the personal and physical aftershocks of the Christchurch earthquake.

Notes from a hillside villa

Winter reflections

The Northern winter months have made museums, reading, and reflecting upon previous morning excursions rather more conducive than bracing oneself for extended periods outdoors contemplating the real thing. That said, a short spell of very mild days—as exquisite as a Sydney winter—encouraged an outing to Florence’s Giardino dei semplici (Orto Botanico). My curiosity had been piqued by the banner on its fence claiming ‘The world’s oldest botanic garden’—only the fine print grouping it with those at Pisa (c.1544), Padua and Florence (both 1545).

The Giardino dei semplici (Garden of simples) was created at the behest of Cosimo I de’Medici, in accordance with ideas of physician, naturalist, and professor of the University of Bologna Luca Ghini—from whose initiative (that students of medicine study live plants) originated the first garden of simples in Pisa (c.1544). Today this role is much reduced and the garden considerably altered in size, layout, and function having shifted in aim to plants principally of ornamental and agricultural interest in the late eighteenth century after becoming entrusted to the Società Botanica Firenze (1718), then to the l’Accademia dei Georgofili (Academy of Geography) (1783).

The *Oxford English Dictionary* states that between c.1580 and 1750 the word ‘simples’ was used to describe ‘a plant or herb employed for medical purposes’. Georgina Masson claimed, however, that definitions relegating simples to the medicinal and kitchen garden were too narrow, at least in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Italian garden when the term could also apply to ornamental flowers and plants. Masson’s 1961 book *Italian Gardens* is still considered essential in studies of Italian Renaissance villa gardens, particularly for its attention to plants. At the time, this book was important in broadening popularly held ideas that the Italian Renaissance garden was fundamentally characterised by green—through the use of Holm oak (*Quercus ilex*), stone or umbrella pine (*Pinus pinea*), cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), laurel (*Laurus nobilis*), arbutus (*Arbutus unedo*), box, myrtle (*Myrtus communis*), ivy (*Hedera helix*), and lawn—and thus considered flowerless.

Valuable research on plants also appears in Claudia Lazzaro’s *The Italian Renaissance Garden* (1990),

now considered something of a classic on the subject. One of the many features of this book is its appended list of common trees, shrubs, climbers, herbs, and flowers. Reflecting the late sixteenth and seventeenth century world of flowers—and the collection and exchange of rare and exotic plants—a range of flowering plants were available to the Renaissance gardener, including anemone, carnations, chrysanthemum, cornflowers, cyclamen, daisy, hollyhock, hyacinth, iris (including *Iris florentina* or Florentine Lily from which derived the symbol of Florence some 750 years ago), jonquil, lavender, lily, marigolds, pansies, peonies, poppies, ranunculus, roses, and sweet violets.

With spring now approaching, the restrained greens of the ‘neo-Renaissance’ Pinsent garden at Villa I Tatti are anticipating transformation. Camellias are in bud, there are bulbs positively bursting out of the ground in the garden beds directly in front of the villa, as well from pots (or vases) elsewhere around the garden. More subtly, little violets dot the stretch of lawn that carpets the long cypress allée. Reading about plants and the Renaissance garden, especially the flowers, therefore seemed timely.

But what about the sources used to understand these early plant materials? Masson consulted various contemporary and later floral, botanical, and horticultural texts, as well as a set of richly detailed observation books belonging to Ulisse Aldrovandi—naturalist and founder of the Botanical Garden at Bologna (in 1568), and a pupil of Ghini. Comprising nine tomes, these books contain Aldrovandi’s ‘notes on letters, lists of seeds, plants and other objects of natural interest he received from a vast circle of correspondents’ as well as notes on items of exceptional interest received or sent by this same circle. Among Aldrovandi’s correspondents were dukes, nobles, counts, monks and rectors, ambassadors, professional men, soldiers, and statesmen, Italian and European—wonderful early evidence of shared (sometimes competing) passions for plants.

An important visual source for plants (as well as for studying other aspects of the Italian Renaissance garden) is provided by the late sixteenth-century lunettes depicting the Medici villas, painted by Flemish painter Giusto Utens between 1599



View of the lower terrace at the Villa della Petraia (September 2010)—much of the garden's structure (terracing and retaining walls) was created during its renovation by Ferdinando de' Medici in 1591–97.

and 1602. The lunette of *L'Ambrogiana*, for example, shows a variety of flowering plants enclosed within a geometric framework of clipped hedges and pleached allees in front of the villa.

Some may be familiar with these incredibly detailed paintings by Utens. One or two are often reproduced in general garden history surveys to illustrate Renaissance gardens in Tuscany (such as *La Pretaia* and *Pratolino*). A composite of several detailed surveys—resulting in ‘a view halfway between painting and cartography from a bird's eye perspective’—the lunettes provide apparently generally trustworthy records of these gardens as they were at the end of the sixteenth century. Caution should however be exercised as Utens apparently ‘corrected’ or idealised some aspects.

Individually the Utens works are quite remarkable, yet even more so when seen en masse. Until very recently this was possible at the Museo Firenze Com'era, sadly now closed to the public (as of October 2010). Their intended effect on guests and visitors to the grand reception hall of the Medici villa at Artimino—where the lunettes originally hung as a group—was to emphasise the power and breadth of the Medici presence throughout Tuscany and in the court of Florence. The canvases were also important in conveying the extent and wonders of the villa

estates. Because of their size and structure (divided over series of terraces and/or discrete spaces), many of the gardens would have otherwise been impossible to comprehend from a single perspective.

It was great to have copies of the Utens lunettes in hand when visiting three of the Florentine Medici villas—Villa della Petraia, Villa Medici di Castello, and the Boboli gardens (dare I say, on an iPad—terrifically compact yet large enough for viewing high-resolution colour reproductions, and wonderful for easily zooming in on details). Comparisons of the gardens now with their late sixteenth-century painted versions show, overall, that the structure, spatial division, the presence of *boschi* (providing an elevated evergreen backdrop to the whole), and some water features (although reduced), survive. However, in the plantings there were some differences at La Petraia and Castello, largely relating to organisation and scale. The terraces are now more parterre-like rather than the geometric compartmentalised gardens seen in the Utens works. And the plants now are predominantly much lower growing (or manipulated thus), so that these sections of these gardens are now characterised by open space and shadeless-ness whereas Utens shows a greater diversity in scale of plants used and a less open character.

Evidently, these gardens have endured many centuries of change, redesign, embellishments, and different management styles since the Medici period. Later additions from the periods of the Lorraine or, later, Savoy families, have their own significance. Nevertheless, I couldn't help feeling a little disgruntled about later changes, wanting to experience more of what had constituted their actual and intended effect (to astonish and impress) on visitors and guests during the Medici ownership. That said, many elements from this

period remarkably have been spared, and the Boboli gardens at the Palazzo Pitti remain astonishing and impressive, in spite of changes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reflecting changing fashions and tastes of successive owners—perhaps the result of being a part of the World Heritage inscription of the city of Florence, hence attracting more attention and therefore better funding (and visa versa) than La Petraia and Castello.

Christina Dyson

For the bookshelf

John Dixon Hunt, *The Venetian City Garden: place, typology, and perception*, Birkhauser, Basel, 2009 (ISBN 9783764389437): 224pp, hardback, RRP US\$99

Wandering about the city of Venice as a tourist, I have been tantalised by fragrant vines tumbling over high walls and the wild-ish, overgrown, and seemingly neglected green spaces in the backwaters around the Castello area at the eastern end of the city and the arsenal, or shipyard. I have often wondered about the secret gardens that might be concealed and the histories of some of the 'old ruined gardens' but have been unsuccessful in finding a comprehensive history of Venice's gardens. That is, until now.

Historian and theorist John Dixon Hunt's recent study of the lagoon city's gardens (that is, excluding consideration of historic gardens on the mainland and in the wider Veneto region) fully satisfied such curiosity, and more. The book's scope spans the lagoon city's origins to the present, and considers its gardens and garden-making within a broad historical, cultural, and social context, concluding with reflections on the uncertain future of both city and its gardens. It offers the reader a rich collection of documentary and visual sources (including plans, maps, drawings, photographs, and paintings), a gazetteer in the centre of the book with a selection of Venetian garden case studies (including current addresses or approximate locations for now lost sites), and the author's characteristically well-informed analysis that is both particular to its subject matter and of wider applicability to other similar places and situations. This broader relevance prepares the ground for the final two chapters which consider efforts in garden making from the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries. 'Garden

history's special perspectives on the past can be used', writes Hunt, 'to suggest opportunities and options for the present, and to try to understand what garden spaces have worked in Venice and what might prove useful, new and yet apt in the future.'

For a longer and more detailed account of *The Venetian City Garden*, interested readers might wish to consult Renzo Dubbini's review in *Garden History*, 38 (1), Summer 2010 (pp.153–55).

Christina Dyson

Christian Lamb, *This Infant Adventure: offspring of the Royal Gardens at Kew*, Bene Factum Publishing Ltd, London, 2010 (ISBN 9781903071298): 224pp, hardback, RRP \$39.95

This octogenarian 'ingenue' has written a racy account in an intriguing blend with wonderful first person/original diary/letter accounts interspersed with travelogue of her highlights of England's great colonial botanic garden network, across colonies as diverse as Australia, India, Ceylon, St Vincent, Jamaica, Singapore, Java, and Mauritius. As Tim Smit (of Heligan and Eden Project fame) says in his forward, Lamb reveals the forgotten economic benefit to mother Empire of her tentacles—rubber, quinine, tea, and coffee plantations made such gardens the 'heartbeat of empire', filling coffers. (A contemporary parallel is California's Silicon Valley.) Three chapters cover Australian gardens: Sydney, Perth, Melbourne, and Canberra (despite Walter Burley Griffin's planned 'Continental Arboretum' between Black Mountain and straddling his lake shores, the Australian National Botanic Garden weren't opened until 1970). Good fun.

Stuart Read

Recently released

David R. Coffin; Vanessa Bezemer Sellers (ed.), *Magnificent Buildings, Splendid Gardens*, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, in association with Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2008 (ISBN 97800691136646): 320pp, hardback, RRP US\$80

David Robbins Coffin (1918–2003) was a considerable figure in the world of art, architectural, and garden history, and this splendid reprinting by his alma mater of a selection of his major articles does his reputation proud. His specialties were villas and gardens of the Renaissance and Baroque, and he published widely in this field, notably in his ground-breaking book *The Villa d'Este at Tivoli* (1960). Nine of the essays presented here—comprising almost half of this handsomely presented volume—concern gardens and landscape designers, ranging from John Evelyn at Tivoli to Venus in the eighteenth-century English garden. Former students and colleagues give commentaries of each selected work, and a comprehensive bibliography rounds out this fine tribute.

Dorothe Imbert, *Between Garden and City: Jean Canneel-Claes and landscape modernism*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA, 2009 (ISBN 9780822943709): 296pp, hardback, RRP US\$55

In their classic 1994 book *Invisible Gardens*, historian Melanie Simo and landscape architect Peter Walker characterised modernist landscapes thus in reference to their often ephemeral nature and lack of popular appreciation. In her examination of Belgian landscape and garden architect Jean Canneel-Claes (1909–1989), Dorothe Imbert documents a previously shadowy career and in the process provides several highly useful contextual chapters on landscapes of modernity (including the impact on residential garden design of functionalism and of links between public landscapes and urbanism) and on ways in which the landscape architecture profession responded to modernism. With a dearth of writing focussed specifically on modernist gardens, *Between Garden and City* provides important documentation and analysis outside the mainstream.

Hannah Lewi & David Nichol (eds), *Community: building modern Australia*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2010 (ISBN 9781742230429): 316pp, paperback, RRP \$59.95

A history linking the building of baby health centres, kindergartens, municipal libraries, and civic

centres in post-war Australia may seem oddly out of place in a garden history journal, but when the imperatives for such works are extended to include facilities for recreation and concurrent concerns for public art, the topic suddenly snaps into focus. Six authors contribute to this innovative and fascinating examination of Australia during a vital period of development, when community concern and action saw modernism in its social guise generating built forms and designed landscapes which produced a legacy we now all but take for granted. As the authors suggest, this is a public good which we must defend against moments of private greed.

Ann & Peter Synan, *Sale Botanic Gardens & Lake Guthridge*, Lookups Research, Sale, VIC., 2010 (ISBN 9780957939363): 204pp, hardback, RRP \$40 plus postage (available from the publisher, Lookups Research, PO Box 678, Sale, Victoria, 3850, or via <aesynan@yahoo.com>)

Here, two well-credentialed local historians have dug deeply into local sources and official records to provide a highly readable and profusely illustrated record of a (now) much-loved garden. Following its reservation in 1860, this site has undergone the vicissitudes suffered by many such reservations, but following renewed public interest in the last decade, the garden and adjoining lake have undergone substantial rejuvenation. This is a substantial, well researched, and colourfully designed book; a model for emulation by any aspiring botanic gardens friends group or local government manager.

Tom Turner, *Asian Gardens: history, beliefs and design*, Routledge, London & New York, 2011 (ISBN 9780415496872): 348pp, hardback, RRP £35

This substantial volume forms a companion to the author's earlier *Garden History: philosophy and design 2000 BC–2000 AD* (2005) and each work embraces an ambitiously wide scope. Here Turner—with his characteristic use of summary diagrams and tightly structured analyses—charges through polytheist, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Daoist, and Shinto gardens of West, South, East, and North Asia, with a welcome concluding chapter on abstract modernism. Some readers may be troubled by Turner's reductionist approach, yet his books pack much between their covers in a manner that is at once quirky, refreshing, and stimulating.

Australia Day honours

Amongst many worthy recipients, two tireless workers in the field of cultural and natural history were recently honoured as Members (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia. Marion Blackwell of Mount Claremont, WA, was recognised 'For services to conservation and the environment, particularly through the Australian Native Plants Society, and to the profession of landscape architecture' while Meredith Walker, of Lilyfield, NSW, was likewise honoured 'For services to heritage conservation through studies for local government and institutions, the development of philosophy and professional standards and the promotion of community participation in heritage identification and management'. Congratulations to both recipients, and to the many others whose sustained efforts have been similarly recognised.

<http://www.aila.org.au/profiles/>

Early Australian newspapers on-line

The extraordinary success of the Australian Newspapers Digitisation Project (see *AGH*, 20 (4), 2009) has encouraged the National Library of Australia to offer this service through its on-line Trove portal. This links the newspapers with a range of other digitised research sources such as Picture Australia (see *AGH*, 21 (2), 2009). Since our initial report of the project, the *Sydney Herald* has been digitally recaptured and this represents a major source for nineteenth and early twentieth century garden history. While the project's focus was initially metropolitan newspapers, many recent additions have been of regional and country titles, giving those lucky enough to have local coverage a major research boost. Until you try this service, its remarkable usefulness can be at best inadequately conveyed.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>

The Stony Rises Project

This project on the Stony Rises landscape in Victoria's Western District—presented as an exhibition and curated by an inter-disciplinary team based at Melbourne's RMIT University—is now touring following a successful showing at RMIT Gallery. Mapping and other recording through art, oral memory, traditional knowledge, prose, and poetry has yielded a richly layered overview

of a complex landscape. Limited stock of the accompanying book, *Designing Place: an archaeology of the Western District* (2010), edited by co-curators Lisa Byrne, Harriet Edquist, and Laurene Vaughan, is still available, so be quick. The book and the exhibition provide excellent background to the new Eugene von Guérard exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria (see page 35). Consult the project and/or publisher's website for exhibition details and availability of the *Designing Place* publication.

<http://thestonyrisesproject.com/>

<http://www.melbournebooks.com.au>

'Historic Gardens of Perth' exhibition

This pictorial exhibition, presented by the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society, will uncover Perth's historic gardens—private pleasure gardens, public parks, plant nurseries, and market gardens—setting them within the special geographical conditions that govern local gardening. AGHS members will be in attendance at the exhibition to assist with interpretation of the images and information, and hopefully to capture any local garden memories of exhibition visitors. The exhibition runs from 13–23 May 2011 (10–4 daily) in the undercroft of Perth Town Hall.

John Stanley Beard (1916–2011)

John Viska from Perth draws our attention to the recent death of botanic gardens director John Stanley Beard (1916–2011). English-born and Oxford-educated, Beard worked in the West Indies and South Africa before his arrival in Western Australia in 1961 as foundation director of the new state botanic garden being established within King's Park. Opened in 1965, his directorship (1961–70) was notable for the sustained promotion of the distinctive local flora for garden use. His *Descriptive Catalogue of Western Australian Plants* (1965) was a major advance in promoting this resource to gardeners. He was subsequently director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney (1970–72) before retiring to Perth. A lengthy obituary was published in the *West Australian* on 24 February 2011.

'The Resource of Landscape'

I was fortunate to participate in the recent forum, 'The Resource of Landscape', held by the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society at the University of Western Australia on 12 March 2011. This year marks the centenary of UWA and Vice-Chancellor Alan Robson noted that the 1927 campus plan evoked imagery of buildings in a parkland setting, creating a campus that is amongst Australia's most attractive, one whose history is told by George Seddon and local AGHS member Gillian Lilleyman in *A Landscape for Learning* (2006).

Capably organised by Caroline Grant, forum proceedings opened with a very moving welcome to country by Nyoongar musician Dr Richard Walley, who characterised the landscape as a 'gift from nature'. Evoking nature through his didgeridoo playing, he noted that 'the last comers are the most destructive—plants came first, then animals, then people'. Geologist Dr Simon Lang sketched the deep time of West Australian geology, noting that geologists tended to use 100,000 years as the minimum unit of time, against which many plants and all humans were mere footnotes—'The notion that there is climate change is omnipotent for the geologist'. Botanist, horticulturist, and designer Marion Blackwell, with her unrivalled knowledge of local plants and their garden use, spoke passionately of the plants she loved, many endemic to 'our continent, vast and varied'. 'One has to change

into a different gear coming to Western Australia.' In a landscape panorama of sweeping proportions, Marion noted that John Lindley's *A Sketch of the Vegetation of the Swan River Colony* (1839) was probably the seminal document underpinning later aesthetic attitudes to the distinctive WA flora. Barely skipping a beat, environmental historian Ruth Morgan provided a neat segue to later colonial and early twentieth century gardening in WA. Invoking George Seddon's dictum 'Fear the hose', she noted the profound significance of water, pre and post reticulation, in the formation of attitudes to local gardening. Responding to questions—following an entertaining session—Marion Blackwell also recalled her experience of landscape design at Leinster, where she strove through locally propagated plants to create a 'town *of* the desert' rather than merely a 'town *in* the desert'.

It was still only 10.30 am and we felt like a lifetime had passed! Sustained by caffeine, the eighty participants then took in diverse case studies presented by designer Craig Burton, and heritage planners Juliet Ramsay (ACT), Stuart Read (NSW), and Stephanie Clegg and Tara Cherrie (WA). Craig focused on controversial foreshore developments in Sydney and Fremantle; Juliet on the cultural landscapes of Tilba and the Australian Alps; Stuart ranged freely. Legislation and guidelines in different states and territories vary, yet the common message

was the need to adequately assess significance and canvass local opinion *prior* to planning permission/approval, a critical sequence often neglected or even willfully disregarded. One respondent quipped that 'we have no respect for tradition; innovation seems to be an excuse for poor design'.

After lunch Renata Zelinova spoke of successes achieved by the Perth Biodiversity Project, notably in bushland protection. Don Newman provided an overview of WA's twentieth-century town planning heritage,



Marion Blackwell (left) and Ruth Morgan provided a complementary overview of Western Australian landscapes, plants, and gardens in their papers at the recent AGHS landscape forum, 'The Resource of Landscape', held in Perth on 12 March 2011.

a state that produced such luminary figures as planning advocate and town clerk William Bold, architect and town planner Harold Boas, and surveyors Percy Hope and Carl Klem. Ross Montgomery spoke candidly on moving from reactive to proactive planning for landscape ('for anyone holding a hammer, every problem looks like a nail'), stressing the slightly unfashionable power of narrative (stories) over facts in planning. His focus was firmly on cultural landscapes and he contrasted usage of terms such as 'landscape' versus 'environment'—the former preferred amongst a pre-1970 demographic; the latter, by a post-1970 generation, to whom the notion of landscape seems slightly fuddy duddy, perhaps lacking scientific objectivity. My own modest contribution—while a 'kinetic' experiment in gathering questions via post-it notes was being undertaken—presented 'The Garden of Ideas' project with a case-study focus on Modernist garden design in Australia. These and other landscapes 'are invisible', noted Craig Burton in response to questions, 'no-one sees them until they're gone'.

Our afternoon session, in an already rich day, witnessed presentations by local landscape architect Phil Palmer on the work of the National Trust; garden historian John Viska on changes to horticultural maintenance standards and the consequent impact on significant gardens (especially those in public ownership); and UWA-based architect Patrick Beale (our genial MC) on treating the forest as a garden—since we have interfered with forests it behoves us to practice sound management of this renewable heritage. John also introduced the local AGHS branch project to mount an exhibition of 'Historic Gardens of Perth' (see page 28). Rappoteur Stuart Read summarised the day's proceedings with his usual *élan*, reiterating the importance of the event and extending a widely expressed appreciation to all concerned in sponsoring and organising such a stimulating event—may it be the first of many.

Richard Aitken

National Management Committee

The AGHS National Management Committee met in Melbourne on the weekend of 12–13 February 2011. A planning day occupied the Saturday, when numerous new projects and activities were canvassed by NMC members, including discussion of forthcoming annual national conferences in Ballarat (2012) and Armidale (2013). One significant outcome was the reconstitution of the Future

Development Working Group to assist the NMC in its deliberations on optimum allocation of resources to the diverse projects and initiatives it considers.

On the Sunday, the committee meeting was occupied by a typically busy agenda. A proposed research register, support for the protection of the Recherche Bay site, and a revamped membership brochure were all discussed. It was noted that memberships were now overwhelmingly received via the Society's website, reinforcing the importance of the internet to groups such as ours and leading to discussion on ways of maximising our web presence, particularly in relating to younger garden historians.

Discussion was also devoted to the Society's AGM, to be held in Melbourne this year on 22 October 2011 at The University of Melbourne. As this does not coincide with the annual conference, a programme of associated events will be held on the weekend of 22–23 October to encourage as many members as possible to take the opportunity to visit Melbourne and catch some of its many varied garden attractions, including a guided tour of The Australian Garden at the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne.

The Garden of Ideas exhibition

This touring exhibition sponsored by the Australian Garden History Society has now concluded its run at Adelaide and is set to open in Melbourne at The Johnston Collection from 4 July until 21 October 2011. A very full programme of events is planned, including two study days (9 July and 10 September) and a series of eight lectures—as well as an exclusive event for AGHS members on 15 September 2011. In conjunction with the exhibition, house tours will be themed under the banner 'Fair Hall and Glad Parlour: the flower, its beauty & meaning in art and ornament', highlighting complementary aspects of the house and its collection. Bookings are essential for all tours and events. Details of these programmes are currently being finalised, but in the meantime keep an eye on The Johnston Collection website.

www.johnstoncollection.org

The Nina Crone Award 2010

The Nina Crone Award valued at \$1000, commemorates the contribution of Nina Crone (1934–2007) to the Australian Garden History Society and aims to encourage new and emerging scholars in the writing of Australian garden history.

The Nina Crone Award for 2010 has been awarded to Dimitri Serghis for his submission entitled 'Creating Beauty: Robert Boyle and the Australian landscape'.

Profile: Stuart Read

Joining the Australian Garden History Society was one of the best decisions I've made. Getting an 'in' on parts of Australia I know little about, meeting people who've created, nurtured, and renewed its nooks, is a singular pleasure.

I love plants and have spent a lifetime propagating, growing, wondering, crushing/sniffing, eating, studying them. Old gardens interest me more than new partly as they're richer, with more character and range. And often, full of lessons: on hardiness, appropriateness (or not—escapes, weeds), fashions, snobbery, power. I was lucky to win a travelling fellowship touring Spain studying historic and new landscapes and decisions on change—finding many lessons for Australia: similar climate and environmental challenges, more population and tourism, a similar plant palette and history of 'stripping', modification, intense use(s), urbanisation.

I find op shops, bookshops, old cities, buildings, cultures more interesting and full of lessons too—I know less and that's exciting, whets the appetite. I have a theory we're slow learners, forgetting history and repeating errors we might avoid. I have a high curiosity index: I'd rather go on a Gourmet Food Safari of Sydney's west—trying Iranian stews, Turkish ice cream, demystifying spice and rice warehouses—than face a row of my local supermarket!

I've been interested in plants as long as I can recall: growing carrot tops on cotton wool, sprouting seeds, planting tulip bulbs, my first tree (a Cootamundra wattle—grew like blazes, flowered the second year, died in seven: a teasing introduction to Australia!), building 'tree forts' up pohutukawa and karaka trees, the smell of chopping their wood for fires and karaka berries rotting underfoot. Wanting to know the names, origins, uses of plants. Two parents fond of learning, encouraging, helped. Readily handed books, helped with school projects, university, on it went. I like to find out when plants were introduced, where crop species came from, and how they 'emigrated'. Economic botany fascinates me and trade over time in both goods and ideas—religions, scholars, the Silk Route, Frankincense Route, pilgrims—and plants.

Background

I grew up in a large old garden in Eastbourne, across the harbour from Wellington, New Zealand. In a line of gardeners—both parents (though mostly my mother; a particular pleasure of wet days was getting



Photo: Mareah Rhodes-White

out her tin of plant labels of what she'd planted and riddling about which had survived, quizzing her, books). A pleasure de-frosting my crusty Victorian grandfather was helping him thin carrots or weed his (military) vegetable garden before the Sunday roast. I never met my mother's father but he seemed a gardener with gusto: keen on abundance and enjoyment (as was my grandmother).

After batting off dreams of car racing and architecture and deciding most major 'digs' in the Middle East were dug up, I turned to landscape architecture. I took an apprenticeship in amenity and commercial production horticulture with Duncan & Davies Ltd., largest export nursery in the Southern Hemisphere, in New Plymouth. Most New Zealanders know 'D & D' from mail-order catalogues, receiving plants by their local railway station. D & D publish their 50-year history this year—timely! I was lucky to catch them when they were consolidating exponential growth, exporting kiwifruit, camellias, and rhododendrons to Europe, the USA, and Asia. Lucky they were well-stocked with learned people and opportunities (e.g. a year in 'Research & Development' on new introductions, selections, propagation techniques). Lucky their

'Stock beds' were scrupulously labelled—not like many botanic gardens. And lucky to be fostered by some great horticulturists including plantsman Jim Rumball, and educator Rob Oates. In my spare time I enjoyed NZ Institute of Horticulture meetings, with groaning plant tables where people brought in what they were growing and talked about it—the best way to learn!

With plants you never 'get there'. There's always more, other realms open up—Canary Island/Saudi Arabian/New Caledonian/sub-Antarctic islands. Recent foci have been 'orchid cacti'—epiphylla, *Selenicereus* with luscious silky blooms, cycads, and bromeliads. I'm struggling to get the hang of conifers, particularly pines, spruces, and firs. Problem is, in Sydney, I hardly see them! Trips to Tasmania and the high country sharpen both need and focus. The thrill of finding others sharing a fascination to learn who'll swap notes adds to it. Doesn't mean I get it right every time, but I'll have a good go! I'd long heard about the International Dendrology (study of trees) Society but thought it unlikely I could join—everyone seemed a Lord or Lady who owned hundred-acre arboreta. Yet I was asked to join, having 'a serious interest in trees'. Now for my sins I'm editing the Australian members' newsletter!

Sources

I'm very interested in cultural patterns and connections: migration, origins. Gardens, but also artists, painting, music, food, influences on design, traditions evolving in isolation or parallel, fascinate me. I've grown up in houses containing books, and collect books on gardens, plants, art, history, and literature. Plant identification books are a feature, but so are botanical art, garden history (design, origins, trade). I collect clippings and articles on trees, cultural landscapes, botany, crops, urban and good modern design. Artists and writers fascinate me and I'm slowly amassing a coterie of favourites, Australian, New Zealand—some relevant to 'place-making' here, others to understanding place, getting under its skin, sifting its psychology. Personal accounts in writers' letters and diaries are a favourite source. *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* is a constant reference, as are past AGH journals, and I'm about to create my own addendum to its index which stops too soon for my liking. It is so useful.

Another key interest is landscape designers, such as Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin (I compiled the 'landscape' components of the

award-winning Griffin Society website www.griffinsociety.org.au), Paul Sorensen, Jocelyn Brown, Edna Walling (who designed some 13 gardens/schemes in NSW, not all built and none 'listed'), 'bush garden' designers Betty Maloney and Jean Walker, Bruce Mackenzie.

Heritage at risk?

I have long been irked that cultural landscapes (farming, orcharding, market gardening), parks, and gardens are 'poor cousins'—overlooked, understudied, under-represented in heritage books and lists, unprotected. I'm sure most people glaze over the planning system and don't understand its power. Pity they don't engage. Perhaps we don't realise the wonders of what we have, how it's under threat, how unique our flora and fauna are, how interesting our 'layered, adopted, amended' living landscapes are: yes, full of imported things and traditions, but adapted in unique ways. The AGHS has done a lot on this, as have individuals (bless them). But I think landscape heritage is the most at risk in Australia. We don't think of it enough, or until proposed for major change: rezoning, subdivision, major infrastructure.

I'm bringing several projects to the AGHS National Management Committee regularly, such as: avenues of honour/memorial avenues around Australia; National Heritage List nominations of gardens/parks; a register of member interests; oral history program, shifting the focus onto 'Living legends/mid-career people of influence'. Particular passions in the Sydney and Northern NSW Branch are encouraging or sponsoring garden history exhibitions and making sure they're put onto the web, or given a longer life than the term of the exhibition (for example the 'Orange Blossoms': New England garden history exhibition and 'Lost Gardens of Sydney').

I admire people who are 'positive change agents'—managing to keep their cool and humour but offering practical solutions to problems people can support, implement. I'd like to think I'm working towards that but evidence mounts of a short temper, impatience, and a lack of diplomacy. I've many mentors and friends I think do great work: quietly, broadly, over a long time and wide scale. Some are focussed on planning, some heritage, design, the environment, or 'sustainability'—it's all connected. I'd like to praise people, celebrate 'wins' or 'good practice' more, rather than criticism—poor outcomes are ever-present. I wish the 'good ones' would breed more and have more influence—a challenge!

Diary dates

APRIL 2011

Kokoda Track Memorial walkway

Sydney and Northern NSW

Sunday 10

Walk among the ambitious plantings and memorials commemorating Australian WWII service men and women in Papua New Guinea, on the Kokoda Track Memorial walk, Bedlam Bay Park, Concord West. 2–4pm, meeting place to be advised on booking. Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com.

Cottesloe Civic Centre

Western Australia

Sunday 10

Talk by Ann Forma on the Landscape Management Plan for the Cottesloe Civic Centre. 2pm, Cottesloe Civic Centre. For more information contact Caroline Grant via email on chhgrant@yahoo.com

Noosa Botanical Gardens

Queensland

Sunday 17

Michael and Kyleigh Simpson will launch their new book *Australian Gardens Making History*, and we will walk through beautiful exotic and native gardens spread over 8 ha on the shores of Lake Macdonald. The garden and forest habitats are home to diverse birdlife. Meet in Cooroy central at 10am for morning tea (location to be advised) then drive the few kilometers to the gardens. Bring lunch to share. Cost: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Bookings to Keith Jorgensen on (07) 3341 3933 or jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

Redlands, Plenty (early 1800s)

Tasmania

Sunday 17

We've been invited back to this historic property to again enjoy the beautiful landscape with many original trees and waterways. There will be a chance to see the result of recent restoration work which included clearing many years' growth to reveal the old carriage road leading to the Salmon Ponds. Morning tea provided. BYO lunch. Cost: \$20 members, \$30 non members. For enquiries contact Liz Kerry at liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au

MAY 2011

The Garden of Ideas

ACT/Monaro/Riverina

Thursday 12

Lecture by author and curator Richard Aitken showcasing the AGHS touring exhibition 'The Garden of Ideas'. Venue: National Library of Australia conference room (4th floor) 6–8pm. Cost: \$10 members, \$15 non-members.

Historic Gardens of Perth, exhibition opening

Western Australia

Friday 13

Opening of the 'Historic Gardens of Perth' exhibition at the Perth Town Hall. For information contact Caroline Grant via email on chhgrant@yahoo.com

Historic Gardens of Perth

Western Australia

Friday 13–Monday 23

Exhibition featuring early Perth gardens. 10am–4pm, in the foyer of the Perth Town Hall.

Birchgrove walk

Sydney and Northern NSW

Saturday 21

Discover Mort Park and Ballast Point Park (both former industrial sites, now two contrasting modern harbour-side parks), and a couple of enchanting private gardens in very diverse locations. 2–5pm, meeting place to be advised on booking. Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

Yeronga and Yerongpilly walking tour

Queensland

Sunday 22

Join the group for a ramble through this attractive park which is on the Queensland Heritage Register and has many points of historic interest. We will then look at some nearby residential gardens. Afternoon tea will be taken at a nearby café. 1.30pm, Honour Avenue in the park, Refidex 179 N 13. Cost: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Bookings to Keith Jorgensen on (07) 3341 3933 or jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

JUNE 2011

Hawkesbury disappearing agriculture day

Sydney and Northern NSW

Sunday 19

Discover the UWS Richmond Campus Secret Garden and Federation-era grounds on this self-drive afternoon tour of Hawkesbury Harvest (farm gate) and Hawkesbury Artists' trails. 10.30–5pm, meeting place to be advised on booking. Cost: to be advised when booking. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

Winter lecture

Victoria

Tuesday 21

Diana Snape will talk on the history of the use of Australian native plants in garden design and by garden designers (many of whom are known to her) who have promoted the use of native plants in designed landscapes. 6pm for 6.30pm, Mueller Hall, The Herbarium, Birdwood Ave., South Yarra. Cost: \$15 members, \$20 non-members, \$5 with students with student card. Enquiries to Pamela Jellie (03) 9836 1881.

JULY 2011

La Perouse day

Sydney and Northern NSW

Sunday 10

Walking tour in La Perouse, which will include the 1788 garden and Botany Cemetery. 2–5pm, meeting place to be advised when booking. Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

Talk on the Walter Hill Project, and AGM

Queensland

Sunday 24

Following the branch AGM artists K.T. Doyle and Jay Dee Dearness will present on their work in textiles and paper which was exhibited as 'Collected patterns: the botany of Walter Hill'. It explores plants cultivated in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens by Hill when he was curator from 1855 to 1881. 2pm, Herbarium seminar room, Brisbane Botanical Gardens, Mt Coot-tha, Toowong. Cost: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Bookings to Keith Jorgensen on (07) 3341 3933 or jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

Gould's book of plants, and AGM

Tasmania

Sunday 31

Those who attended the Launceston conference were fascinated by Associate Professor Hamish Maxwell Stewart's lecture on this subject. We are delighted he has agreed to present this lecture to the Tasmanian Branch, as many of our members were unable to attend the Conference. Being an AGM this event will be free. Afternoon tea will be provided. Venue to be advised. For enquiries contact Liz Kerry at liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au

AUGUST 2011

Eastern influences in English gardens, and AGM

Sydney and Northern NSW

Wednesday 3

A short AGM will be followed by Colleen Morris speaking on Eastern influences in the English garden. 6pm (AGM), 7pm (talk), Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost: \$20 members, \$30 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

32nd Annual National Conference, Maryborough

From colonial river port to the hinterland, it's all about the Mary

Queensland

Friday 19–Sunday 21/Optional Monday 22

The Australian Garden History Society's 32nd Annual National Conference enters new territory for the Society as Maryborough is deep in the sub-tropics. Expect to see and experience different landscapes and a sub-tropical approach to gardening. Maryborough is a fine heritage city with many beautiful buildings and gardens. The conference will explore Maryborough's garden and wider cultural landscape history, which have been shaped by a range of factors, including the region's sub-tropical climate, timber and sugar industries, gold mining, local horticulture, and the macadamia nut. The optional day offers a rare opportunity to visit some grazing properties in the hinterland.

Eugene von Guérard retrospective at the National Gallery of Victoria

Christine Reid

A few weeks ago, early one morning, I was driving along a quiet back road in western Victoria. As I came over a crest in the road, an exquisite panorama of delicate blue sky, fluffy clouds, and sunlight unfolded before me. My immediate impression was of a vast von Guérard canvas. Such is the vision and accuracy of the Australian paintings of German artist Eugene von Guérard (1811–1901) that they are now regarded as a repository of critical and accurately recorded environmental information, according to researcher Dr Ruth Pullin.

Pullin is the curator of a major retrospective of von Guérard's work currently on show at the National Gallery of Victoria in Federation Square. AGHS members who attended the Geelong conference in 2009 may remember Ruth Pullin's talk where she examined details of some of von Guérard's many sketchbooks and outlined his meticulous observation. She writes:

On the many expeditions undertaken by the artist in his 30 years in Australia (1852–82)

he recorded his observations in his small pocket-sized sketchbooks. The information contained in his precise and detailed pencil and ink drawings, often amplified with notes, was such that he could produce paintings of a subject seen sometimes years earlier, as in, for example, Mount William and part of the Grampians in West Victoria, sketched on a June day in 1856 and produced with great freshness and breathtakingly microscopic detail years later.

Pullin's extensive researches examine how von Guérard was greatly influenced by the ideas of Alexander von Humboldt's *Cosmos*, first published in Germany in 1847. The ideas it contained changed the way the natural world was understood, reflecting Humboldt's wonder at the diversity of nature and his ground-breaking recognition of the interconnectedness of natural phenomena.

Pullin points out that two Humboldtian-influenced scientists—botanist Ferdinand von Mueller and



Eugene von Guérard, 'Mr Clark's Station, Deep Creek, near Keilor' (detail), 1867—a well-known view of the garden of Glenara (subsequently the home of rosarian Alister Clark).

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (purchased with the assistance of the National Gallery Society of Victoria and Mr and Mrs Solomon Lew, 1986)



Eugene von Guérard, 'North-east view from the northern top of Mount Kosciusko', 1863—one of the artist's most celebrated mountain views. National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (purchased 1973)

geophysicist Georg von Neumayer—as well as von Guérard, forged their careers in Australia, making major contributions in their respective fields. She also highlights important connections between the group. Indeed, von Guérard travelled with von Neumayer on two of the expeditions that the scientist undertook as part of his magnetic survey of the Colony of Victoria. As a result, we have today two magnificent scenes of the Mount Kosciusko area of the 1860s.

Von Guérard's extensive journeys in the southern hemisphere are extraordinary—from Victoria's alpine regions to New Zealand's fiords, from the temperate rainforest of the Illawarra region south of Sydney, to the rugged coastline of southern Victoria as well as the relative domesticity of homesteads dotted across the volcanic plains of western Victoria. The record left by von Guérard of the homesteads, gardens, and landscapes of western Victoria is substantial. It includes panoramic views such as Tower Hill, near Warrnambool—the revegetation program undertaken a few years ago used von Guérard's painting and sketch-books as a guide—to the topographic views of landmarks such as Mount Elephant and Mount William. His meticulous detail in house portraits, from Meningoort and Purrumbete, gives

us a remarkable insight into the cultural and social aspirations of successful colonial landowners.

Pullin's argument about the Humboldtian influence is persuasive but it is just one of the possible approaches to von Guérard's work. The influence of German Romanticism and the influence of seventeenth-century masters of landscape painting, such as Salvator Rosa, are apparent. Another influence, particular to the early nineteenth century, is the fascination with the panorama—von Guérard sketched one of Melbourne in 1855—and natural events such as bushfires.

The exhibition celebrates, above all, the importance of Eugene von Guérard in Australian art and history and the enduring relevance of his vision of nature.

Eugene von Guérard: Nature revealed is showing at NGV Australia until 7 August 2011.

Christine Reid, with Harriet Edquist, is undertaking a major study of the cultural geography of western Victoria, an inter-disciplinary project drawing on expertise in architecture, art and cultural theory, gardens, and landscape history. Von Guérard's works provide an invaluable pictorial record for the study.



Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.